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ORGANIZATION OF COTTON GROWERS

THE PLAN URGED BY MR. W. K. SLIGH.

After Talking to Many Cotton Planters in this and Other Counties.

At the request of many cotton farmers with whom he has talked during the past several days, Mr. W. K. Sligh has consented to give to the public a plan which he has had in mind for the more perfect organization of the cotton growers, and a consequent increase in the price of cotton which will make its growth profitable to the south. The cotton planters with whom Mr. Sligh has talked think the plan if properly carried out, would work great advantage to the south. When seen yesterday by a representative of The Herald and News, Prof. Sligh, in talking of his plan said:

"That the Southern Cotton Growers association has rendered valuable services in behalf of the cotton farmers is conceded by all who are familiar with the facts and unbiased in their judgment. That it has failed as yet to raise the price to eleven cents per pound, the price demanded by the Asheville convention, is no reason why its efforts should not be seconded further by every well-wisher of the south, but on the contrary, this is the very reason why every one should rally to its support at this time. What is the situation today? Representatives of the cotton growers after mature deliberation and in view of the responsibility resting upon them have solemnly declared that eleven cents is a reasonable minimum price for cotton this year and they have asked the cotton growers to hold their cotton for this price. Have the farmers done it? Yes, a few here and there have complied with the request, many have sold to satisfy pressing obligations and the great majority have sold all or some part of their crop simply because they have thought it under the circumstances, good business to do so.

"And what are the circumstances under which the farmer finds himself and under which he considers it prudent to sell his cotton at current prices? First, the current prices are good when compared with prices that he has received some other years. At current prices he can make some money and that is more than he is accustomed to do. So he takes his small profit while he may, and that from his viewpoint is not a bad thing to do.

"Second, he knows that the Southern association demanded eleven cents and he knows that his own state and county convention passed resolutions to hold for eleven cents. He is convinced that eleven cents can be had if enough cotton is held for that price and he himself would be willing to hold if he could have positive assurance that enough others would also hold. But right here is the trouble. He does not know what others will do, neither can he know. It is not so much a lack of confidence in his fellows that is the trouble as it is a lack of information upon which to base confidence. Under present conditions the farmers in our county cannot know what the farmers even in the adjacent counties are doing with their cotton. South Carolina would like to know what Texas is doing and Texas is equally anxious to learn the true conditions in South Carolina and Georgia and Alabama and the rest of the states. Cotton growers in South Carolina, for instance, can't be expected to withhold their cotton from the market at ten cents unless they have positive, tangible proof that a definite number of growers in other states are doing likewise. To expect them to hold on the mere strength of resolutions, passed under the influence of a

strong appeal, is unreasonable and unbusinesslike. There is no fault to be found with the resolutions and the appeals. They are good in their place and serve a purpose. But they do not tell how many bales will be held for eleven cents, and that is just what must be known to make this movement succeed. Can this be known? Can enough bales be secured and pledged to insure the price demanded? Yes, if a clear-cut, practical, economical plan can be devised that will appeal to a large number of growers because of its simplicity, security and strength. Is such a plan possible? Yes, three great facts which should never be lost sight of make such a plan not only possible but feasible. Now for the three great facts. First, for all practical purposes the south enjoys and will continue to enjoy a monopoly in the production of cotton. Second, cotton at twelve cents per pound cannot be displaced by flax, wool or silk, its only substitutes and rivals. Third, cotton is not quickly perishable, but can be kept for years in good condition and that without expensive housing. These facts translated mean that the cotton growers of the south furnish the world's supply of cotton, that the world can and will pay at least twelve cents per pound for all it needs unless the cotton growers choose to sell for less and that if the world is unwilling or unable to take all the south grows in a given year she can keep it until the next year and get her price. It is not lost simply because it is not sold the year it is made. All speculation proceeds upon the theory that when a bale of cotton is made it will be sold the same year.

"The plan made possible by these facts in rough outline is this:

"Let the cotton growers deed in trust a definite number of bales to be sold for not less than a fixed price per pound basis middling. Let there be, say three trustees, two from the county in which the deed is made and one representing the whole south who shall be a trustee of all cotton deeded under this plan. Make it a condition that it shall require the consent of two trustees and the owner of the cotton before a sale can be made. Let the grower have the keeping of his cotton, he may keep it at home or warehouse it. Let all bids or applications for cotton be sent by the local trustee to the general trustee who shall tabulate the same and apportion to the several counties the amount, each is authorized to sell; this of course will be in proportion to the cotton held in trust. The local trustees will then apportion to the individuals in their counties and notify them to bring in their cotton on a fixed day if they want to sell. Each grower will get paid for his cotton the day it is delivered. The work of the trustees would be purely clerical. They would simply collect say 25 cents a bale for expense of handling which would go into the general treasury to pay salaries. All cotton held in trust at the close of the season would be carried over and sold the next year before any new cotton was offered.

"In trying to put such a plan as this into operation the deeds of trust should be so drawn that they would not go into effect until a fixed number of bales had been deeded and a time limit should be fixed in which to secure the required number. The details of such a plan would work themselves out in due time. Some such plan as this would effectually withdraw a definite number of bales from the market until the fixed price is reached. The minimum number of bales to be placed in trust should be large enough to dominate the situation beyond doubt. As soon as this number of bales is pledged outside growers would be inspired with confidence to hold for the fixed price and cotton would advance at once to that price.

"Moreover, the plan while with-

drawing the cotton from the market would still leave it in the hands of the grower, who would not part with it until it is sold. If the grower would care to hold for a still higher price he could do so. The object in having a general office for the whole country is to insure every man's having an equal chance with every other man to sell his cotton. In the event a surplus should be carried over the general office would see that every man carried his share and his share only. The plan ought to appeal very strongly to the manufacturer. It would give him a level price. Then, too, he could get cotton in large lots without the charges of the middle men. The general trustee should be a man of national repute, Mr. Jordan, for instance, and the county trustees should be the very best men that could be secured.

"All that is needed is the money necessary to make the initial canvass and a strong faith in the southern people. And why not attempt this or something better? Is not the prize large enough? Did any people ever battle for a greater? Is not this the day of large things? Does anyone doubt that the price would go to twelve cents if sufficient cotton were withdrawn from the market and held for that figure? No one doubts it, every one believes that the price could be kept at twelve cents every year under those conditions. He who doubts the success of such a plan simply has not sufficient faith in the southern people. Why doubt them? Have they had a chance to prove what they will do? Are not our people already awake to the great possibilities before them? Are they not tired of being the hewers of wood and drawers of water for a set of speculators who have seized upon their one great product and made its price their favorite plaything with which to gamble? Let the cotton growers have a chance to say what they will do. Will the Southern Cotton association take hold of this matter and give the people a definite, sure plan along which to work or will it content itself with speeches and resolutions?

"If the association will not lead, then the fact ought to be known that an effort might be made to get individuals to supply the necessary funds.

"Of course, there will be persons enough to cry 'trust, trust,' but this is no trust. It does not have one element of a trust in it. It does not seek to destroy competition, it does not seek to lower the price of any product or commodity, and it does not infringe anyone's rights in cotton. No man has any right in cotton except the man who raises it, until it is acquired by purchase at such price as the grower may accept. If a number of laborers have the right to pledge one another that they will not work for less than a stated wage, the cotton growers have a right to pledge themselves that they will not accept less than a fixed price for their cotton, the product of their labor. If farmers have a right to meet and pass resolutions pledging themselves not to sell cotton for less than a certain price, surely they have the right to take steps to make their resolutions effective."

Reflections Of A Bachelor.

The more a man loves a woman the more he has to tell her so, or she won't believe him.

A girl has an awfully deceptive way of making a man believe he is doing the proposing.

A woman is mighty clever to make a man think the reason she loves him is that he loves her.

You can never make a man believe when he is carrying a bundle, that everybody does not think it contains some awful queer woman's clothes.

A curious thing about women is that either they find fault with the way cheap cigars smell in the shop or with the money you waste on good ones.

STATE SECRETARY DELIVERS ADDRESS

COUNTY COTTON ASSOCIATION MET ON SATURDAY.

Gratifying Interest Noted—Large Attendance—President Smith Could Attend.

The county cotton association held a meeting in the court house on Saturday. The attendance was very good and much interest seemed manifested on the part of the farmers present. The disposition of the average farmer is to sell his cotton when the market goes down, and to hold it when it goes up. Inasmuch as the market has tended upwards in the last few days, it is probable that a good many farmers have felt encouraged to stand for the minimum price as fixed by the Southern cotton association. This may account for the large attendance and the interest in the meeting on Saturday; or it may be that the farmers were expecting President E. D. Smith of the state association to be present, and make an address as had been advertised, or it may be that they have at last realized that they are masters of the situation if they but stand together. At any rate it was gratifying to note the interest in the meeting.

It was impossible for Mr. Smith to get here inasmuch as he had been ordered to Texas. Mr. F. H. Weston, the secretary of the state association was present, however, and made a most excellent talk.

The meeting was called to order by President R. T. C. Hunter who introduced Mr. Joseph L. Keitt. Mr. Keitt gave a brief history of the organization of the farmers, and advised them to organize and stand firm by the organization and told them that by so doing they could secure a price for their product which would give them not only the cost of production, but a reasonable profit, and as good business men, they should not expect anything less.

President Hunter then presented Hon. F. H. Weston, the secretary of the state association. He spoke for about an hour, urging the farmers to stand up to the Southern cotton association, and giving his reasons for the position that he took in strong and forcible language.

He began his address by regretting the absence of Mr. Smith, and stated that they had been disappointed in the action of some of the Texas farmers, and that Mr. Smith and Mr. Jordan had been ordered to Texas to talk to the farmers out there, and to explain to them the folly of forcing their cotton on the market at this time, thus weakening the influence of the Southern cotton association in securing the minimum price which had been fixed by the association.

Mr. Weston said it was scarcely necessary to speak of the history of the association as that was still fresh in the memory of all present.

He said that high priced cotton meant prosperity to the south. Every vocation in the south was dependent on the cotton business. Last year when disaster threatened the south, a convention of southern cotton growers and men in every business in the south was held in New Orleans. There was no politics in this convention. It was a meeting of the southern people interested in the growth and development of the south, and the only credentials required for admission to this convention were that you were a patriotic southern man. It was a business organization. As a result of this convention, disaster which threatened the south was averted, and in the face of a fourteen million bale crop, the price of cotton was forced from six and seven cents to ten cents, because at anything less than that price cotton

could not be produced except at a loss.

Mr. Weston stated that the southern states have an absolute monopoly of cotton production, and can fix the price and the consumers must come to them in order to secure the product. The man who buys and the man who manufactures makes money out of cotton, and it was but right and reasonable that the producer should be taken into consideration, and that he was entitled not only to a living, but to a reasonable profit upon his labor.

England and the other countries which it is claimed can grow cotton have the same government, the same conditions and the same labor which they had in 1860 and 1865 when cotton brought \$1.60 per pound, and they could not produce it then, and how will they be able to produce it now when the price is under 15 cents. In addition to this there is no product which can come in competition with cotton.

All that the Southern cotton association is contending for is a reasonable profit to the farmers and in this contention the farmer has the cooperation of the bankers and the merchants, and unless he succeeds now he may not expect success for many years to come.

Any man who is opposed to this organization, and who will not encourage and help it, is either ignorant or has treachery in his heart, and is certainly destitute of patriotic motives. Every other business is organized, and the question is, shall the farmers go up against these organizations in a disorganized way. If they do, they are destined to fail. It is possible for the farmers to organize, and they must. This movement appeals not only to your selfish motives, but to your patriotism as well, and you must not fail.

When the association last year fixed the price at ten cents, some who thought they were smart and would get the laugh on the members of the association, sold when it reached eight cents.

Mr. Weston urged that the farmers needed to trust each other more, and to have more confidence in the advice of the officers of the association. The association has statistics, and when a statement is made it is based on facts. When we stated that the government report was doctored, some people laughed at us, but we made good the statement.

Mr. Roosevelt said in his speech in Atlanta last week that the Southern cotton association was the greatest organization that had ever been formed, and whatever he could do to help it to success he would willingly do.

Those who had faith last year in their fellow men, and in the organization, realized for their cotton before July, ten cents per pound. If you have faith, backbone and patience, and stand to the organization now, you will get eleven cents for your cotton. Take your cotton home, and sit down on it. Put it in the warehouse and take the warehouse receipt, and get money on that if you are obliged to have money, but retain possession of your cotton, and keep it off the market.

In regard to warehouses, Mr. Weston said, he hoped people would show a spirit of liberality in helping to build them. The fight is not over. It is a plain business proposition. Put your cotton in warehouses, and get money from our banks, and turn the key on it, unless you can get a living price for it.

"I have some business reputation in my community," said Mr. Weston. "I would not come here and tell you to hold your cotton for eleven cents unless we had some reason for it. Have a little more confidence in your fellowman, and a little more backbone in yourself. Public sentiment should be so strong with this movement, that the man who refuses to join hands

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